

THE BARAMA RIVER CARIBS

601 in the terminology concerning the lineal affiliations of the grand-
614 parent's generation and of the grand-children's generation. As
explained above, the separation of the maternal and paternal
lines in the three "middle" generations is a natural reflection of
the incest tabus which arise in a society in which the levirate
and sororate are actively functioning. Under such conditions
terminological distinctions are functionally necessary in the three
middle generations, but are merely superfluous in the grand-
parents' and grandchildren's generations. On the other hand,
if the system were based on a sib organization, a host of economic,
religious, and social factors would demand a recognition of the
linear affiliations of the members of the grandparents' and grand-
children's generations, if these generations were recognized at all.
Such a lack of interest in the linear affiliations of the second
ascending and second descending generations, as displayed in the
Barama Carib system, is wholly foreign to the systems of the
majority of sib organizations of which we know.

601 We may summarize the facts favoring the contention that the
587 Barama Carib kinship terminology, which distinguishes the ma-
ternal and paternal lines only in the three "middle" generations,
is connected with the levirate and sororate rather than with a
sib or dual organization. 1. The levirate and sororate are still ac-
tively functioning, while there is no evidence of a present or
former sib grouping. 2. Indifference is displayed in the termi-
nology concerning the linear affiliations of the members of the
grandparents' and of the grandchildren's generations. 3. Cross
cousins are equated with all marriageable persons, whether demon-
strably related by blood or not, a usage inconsistent with a strict
dual organization.

603 The failure to distinguish sex of grandchildren reflects the
591 break-up of the family which occurs as a result of extralocal
marriage. Informants displayed great difficulty in remembering
their grandchildren, because, as they said, their children move
away after marriage and they lose track of their grandchildren.
It will be remembered that marriage is matrilocal only until the
birth of the first child. Birth and rearing of grandchildren usually
takes place in a settlement removed from that of the grandparents.
The average old man or woman will have difficulty in telling how

OF BRITISH GUIANA

95

many grandchildren he or she has, and if the number is remembered, the sex of the several grandchildren is often vague. This state of affairs added no little to the difficulty of obtaining genealogies. The grandchild is characteristically not a real person of the grandparent's experience.

Grandparents, on the other hand, are much more real personalities to their grandchildren than the reverse. Even if a grandchild seldom sees the grandparent in the flesh, the older individual's personality is impressed upon the child through the conversation and allusions of the parents. Hence, it is natural that the grandparents are distinguished according to sex.

A further peculiarity of the system is to be noted in the provisions made permitting the marriage of a man with his sister's daughter, a type of marriage which has also been reported from the Carib Tamanak, Macusi, Galibi, Island Carib, Cumanagoto, Chayma, and Palenke, as well as the Coastal Tupi.¹ Among the Barama Caribs a man calls his sister's daughter takano ("marriageable" or cross cousin), and a woman calls her mother's brother iyao, the term which she uses for all men whom she may marry. Consistent with this usage is the fact that a woman calls the children of her mother's sister by the same terms which she uses for her own children and the fact that she calls children of maternal parallel cousins by the same term which she uses for her own grandchildren. Two cases of marriage between a man and his sister's daughter were noted in the area. At the present time it seems to be an archaic type of marriage. "Marriage with the sister's daughter," says Kirchhoff,² "is, aside from the jungle tribes of South America, known only among a number of mostly Dravidian tribes and castes of India and among the Tungus of East Siberia. . . . The Carib sources are clear only on one point, namely, that it is among them (as also among the Coastal Tupi) a deep-rooted system. On the other hand, the sources from the Coastal Tupi supply thorough going information among which statements concerning this custom can be found. We find, thus, two wholly different situations reported in which this form of marriage is customary. . . . In the first place, this form of

¹ Kirchhoff, 1932, *Verwandschaftsbezeichnungen*, and Kirchhoff, 1932, a, *Die Verwandschaftsorganisation der Urwaldstämme Südamerikas*.

² Kirchhoff, 1932, *Verwandschaftsbezeichnungen*, p. 58. Translation by author.